

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-13 ISO-00 NEAE-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00

USIE-00 INRE-00 ERDA-05 AID-05 CEA-01 CIAE-00

COME-00 EPG-02 EB-07 FEAE-00 FPC-01 H-01 INR-07

INT-05 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 OMB-01 PM-04 OES-07

SP-02 SS-15 STR-04 TRSE-00 ACDA-07 DLOS-09 PRS-01

PA-01 /129 W

-----061445Z 083558 /46

O 061334Z JUN 77

FM AMEMBASSY TUNIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7010

INFO AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY ALGIERS PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY CAIRO PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY PARIS PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY RABAT PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY ROME PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY VALLETTA PRIORITY

USLO RIYADH PRIORITY

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY

CINCUSNAVEUR PRIORITY

EUCOM PRIORITY

COMSIXTHFLT PRIORITY

USDOCOSOUTH NAPLES PRIORITY

SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY

CTF SIX SEVEN PRIORITY

CTF SIX NINE PRIORITY

COG SIX ZERO PT TWO PRIORITY

FOSIF ROTA, SPAIN PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L TUNIS 3951

USLO RIYADH PASS SENATOR RICHARD STONE

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CINCUSNAVEUR AND EUCOM FOR POLADS; USDOCOSOUTH PASS

CINCOSOUTH FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR PLOS ENRG TS LY

SUBJECT: GOT ANNOUNCES THAT LIBYAN AND TUNISIAN FOREIGN

MINISTERS ARE TO MEET IN TUNIS JUNE 7

REF: TUNIS 3896, TRIPOLI 0731, TUNIS 3940

1. SUMMARY: GOT HAS PUBLICLY INTERPRETED QADHAFI'S JUNE 2 SPEECH AS A "POSITIVE INITIATIVE," AND HAS ANNOUNCED THAT THE LIBYAN AND TUNISIAN FOREIGN MINISTERS WILL MEET IN TUNIS JUNE 7, UNDER AUSPICES OF ARAB LEAGUE PRESIDENT. END SUMMARY.

2. TUNISIAN MEDIA ANNOUNCED OVER WEEKEND THAT IN VIEW OF QADHAFI'S SPEECH OF JUNE 2, IN WHICH THE LIBYAN PRESIDENT REPORTEDLY "EXPRESSED HIS DESIRE TO RESOLVE THE CONTINENTAL SHELF PROBLEM THROUGH ARBITRATION AND NEGOTIATION AND HIS DETERMINATION TO AVOID A CONFRONTATION AMONG BROTHER STATES," THE CURRENT DISPUTE WITH LIBYA IS "ON ITS WAY TOWARDS A SOLUTION." THIS WAS ANNOUNCED SATURDAY EVENING BY PSD PARTY DIRECTOR MOHAMED SAYAH (ALSO MINISTER ATTACHED TO PRIME MINISTER) AFTER HE HAD MET WITH PRESIDENT BOURGUIBA JUST BEFORE BOURGUIBA RECEIVED LIBYAN AMBASSADOR ZENTANI AT PRESIDENTIAL PALACE AFTERNOON OF JUNE 4.

3. ACCORDING TO SAYAH, BOURGUIBA EXPRESSED TO ZENTANI HIS "SATISFACTION" WITH QADHAFI'S JUNE 2 SPEECH. IN HEAVILY REPORTED STATEMENT DELIVERED BEFORE A PARTY MEETING IN TUNIS, SAYAH SAID PRESIDENT TOOK NOTE OF QADHAFI'S "POSITIVE INITIATIVE TOWARDS AVOIDING THE DANGERS OF A CONFRONTATION BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES." SIMILAR THEME WAS FOLLOWED IN RADIO-TV NEWS COMMENTARY SUNDAY, CONFIDENTIAL

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WHICH TERMINATED IN EVENING ANNOUNCEMENT THAT FOREIGN MINISTERS OF LIBYA AND TUNISIA WILL MEET IN TUNIS ON TUESDAY, JUNE 7, UNDER AUSPICES OF ARAB LEAGUE PRESIDENT MAHMOUD RIADH, TO REVIEW OUTSTANDING PROBLEMS BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES. JUNE 5 MEDIA ALSO ANNOUNCED THAT BOURGUIBA WOULD PRESIDE OVER MEETING OF PSD POLITICAL BUREAU AT PRESIDENTIAL PALACE AT 10:00 A.M. MONDAY, JUNE 6.

4. ALL PAPERS JUNE 5 GAVE PROMINENT COVERAGE TO STATEMENT OF AHMED MESTIRI, EX-GOT MINISTER AND LEADER OF MODERATE SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC ("LIBERAL") OPPOSITION GROUP, EXPRESSING GENERAL SUPPORT OF GOT IN CONTINENTAL SHELF QUESTION, "WHICH TOUCHES SOVEREIGNTY, DIGNITY AND DESTINY OF OUR COUNTRY." SPEAKING FOR HIS GROUP, MESTIRI REFERRED TO AN EARLIER DECLARATION (MARCH 20, 1976) IN WHICH SOCIAL DEMOCRATS STATED THEY WOULD DEFEND THE STATE IF ATTACKED AND THEY WOULD NOT SERVE AS AN INSTRUMENT FOR AN EXTERNAL

ACTION AIMED AGAINST THE STATE. NOTING THAT DOMESTIC DIFFERENCES MUST BE PUT ASIDE UNTIL THE INDEPENDENCE AND SECURITY OF THE STATE ARE NO LONGER IN QUESTION, MESTIRI ALSO REFERRED TO HIS GROUP'S CONTINUING OPPOSITION TO THE JANUARY 1974 JERBA UNITY DECLARATION AND CALLED UPON PRESIDENT TO DEAL WITH THE CONTINENTAL SHELF DISPUTE "AT A NATIONAL AND HISTORIC LEVEL DETERMINING CHOICES AND OPTIONS IN ORDER TO CLARIFY THE PATH WHICH THE TUNISIAN PEOPLE MUST FOLLOW".

5. COMMENT: QADHAFI'S SPEECH HAS NOT BEEN PUBLISHED IN TUNISIA ALTHOUGH IT WAS BROADCAST TWICE ON LIBYAN RADIO, WHICH IS EASILY HEARD HERE. GOT HAS APPARENTLY CHOSEN TO USE WHAT FEW POSITIVE ELEMENTS IT CONTAINED (TRIPOLI 0731) AS A PUBLIC BASIS FOR REOPENING NEGOTIATIONS IN HOPES THAT "J.W. BATES" REMOVAL COULD BE ACCOMPLISHED PEACEFULLY IN NEXT FEW DAYS. ALL LEVELS OF TUNISIAN SOCIETY ARE CALLING FOR FIRM ACTION FROM THE GOVERNMENT IN DEFENSE
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OF "LIBYA'S CHALLENGE TO TUNISIAN NATIONAL SOVEREIGNTY." ANNOUNCEMENT OF NEW NEGOTIATIONS IN RESPONSE TO QADHAFI'S "POSITIVE INITIATIVE" APPEARS CONCEIVED AS SUCH A DEMONSTRATION OF FIRM ACTION WHILE STILL AVOIDING RESORT TO FORCE.

6. SATURDAY AFTERNOON, FOREIGN MINISTRY OFFICIAL TOLD US INFORMALLY THAT GOVERNMENT TOWELL WAS DIVIDED AS TO WHAT COURSE OF ACTION TO FOLLOW, BUT EVIDENTLY BOURGUIBA HAS DECIDED TO TAKE CONCILIATORY TACK ONCE AGAIN. WE DO BELIEVE GOT'S NEW EFFORT AT NEGOTIATIONS WITH LIBYA IS DIRECTLY RELATED TO CHATTY'S PROMISE TO GIVE READING & BATES TEN DAYS (FROM MAY 31) TO CEASE ITS OPERATIONS IN UNCONTESTED ZONE (TUNIS 3898) AND THAT THE FUSE IS STILL SHORT.

7. WE HAVE NO FURTHER INFORMATION ON THE ANNOUNCED MEETING BETWEEN CHATTY AND TURAYKI IN TUNIS ON JUNE 7. IF WE HAVE READ TRIPOLI'S RESUME OF QADHAFI'S JUNE 2 SPEECH CORRECTLY, THE LIBYAN POSITION DOES NOT GIVE MUCH ENCOURAGEMENT TO HOPES THAT TUNISIA AND LIBYA ARE CLOSER TO AN ACCORD THAN THEY WERE LAST WEEK. FROM OUR STANDPOINT, THE "J.W. BATES" IS STILL A "POOR INSURANCE RISK," NOTWITHSTANDING THE GOT'S OFFICIALLY EXPRESSED OPTIMISM FOR THE FORTHCOMING TALKS. AS FURTHER INDICATION OF HOW SERIOUSLY MATTERS ARE VIEWED HERE, BOURGUIBA'S FORMAL MEETING TODAY WITH PARTY'S POLITICAL BUREAU WILL BE FIRST HE HAS HAD IN THREE YEARS.
MULCAHY

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
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Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
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Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
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Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
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Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
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Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 77 TUNIS 3896, 77 TRIPOLI 731, 77 TUNIS 3940
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 04-Nov-2004 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2256621
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: GOT ANNOUNCES THAT LIBYAN AND TUNISIAN FOREIGN MINISTERS ARE TO MEET IN TUNIS JUNE 7
TAGS: PFOR, PLOS, ENRG, TS, LY
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/5c253984-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009